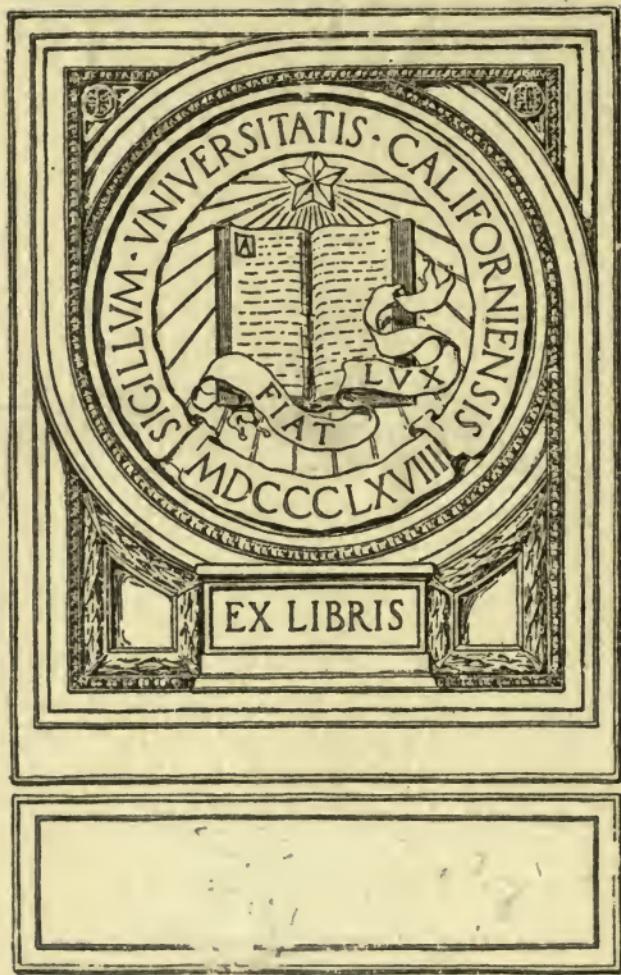


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A SHORT VIEW
OF THE
POLITICAL SITUATION
OF THE
NORTHERN POWERS:
FOUNDED ON
OBSERVATIONS
MADE DURING A TOUR THROUGH
RUSSIA, SWEDEN, AND DENMARK,
IN THE LAST SEVEN MONTHS OF THE YEAR 1800.
WITH
CONJECTURES
ON THE
PROBAELE ISSUE OF THE APPROACHING CONTEST.

By WILLIAM HUNTER, Esq.
OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

"Concordia res parvæ crescunt, discordia maxime dilabuntur."

SAL.

London:
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1801.

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By T. Gillet, Salisbury-Square,

A

SHORT VIEW,

&c. &c.

AT a time, when the convulsions, the efforts, and the malignity of France, have shaken, more or less, every government in Europe but our own ; at a time, when every other country is nearly exhausted, both in treasure and population, by the expences and ravages of this cruel and unparalleled war, with what satisfaction, notwithstanding all our reverses, ought we to look around, from the proud eminence on which we are placed. Whilst other nations, breathless and terrified, are shrinking from the contest ; imploring peace, or suing for protection ; deserting their old friends, and leaguing with their late enemies ; Britain, reposing on her resources, the virtue and patriotism of her inhabitants, the extensive range of her commerce, the vigour and firmness of her government, the distinguished bravery of her troops, and the unconquerable spirit of

her navy, surveys the scene with interest but calmness, with solicitude but without dismay.

Deserted by every friend, surrounded by a host of foes, she now stands alone, to try her strength against the united efforts of Europe. But, neither the disgraceful secession of her allies, nor the unexpected increase of her enemies, can startle her from her purpose, which is the conservation of her independence and her rights. As she has been moderate in prosperity, so can she be firm in adversity. Fear will not accomplish, what force can never extort. Steady to those principles which she has invariably maintained, and on the maintenance of which her future prosperity and happiness depend, she will meet the conflict with fortitude and composure, and, in the review of past events, foresee a future harvest of success and fame.

For many years, our exertions, not only provided for our own security, but upheld the system which might have been successfully opposed to the intolerant ambition of France. The disjointed politics, the follies, and dissensions of our allies, have, in regular succession, severed them from their interests, and applied the

seal of ruin to their fate. What concord and perseverance might have accomplished, pusillanimity and disunion have reversed. Let us profit by their example. Let us contemplate the melancholy ruins of governments and empires, which are scattered over the altered face of Europe, and be convinced of the necessity of rallying round the sacred altar of liberty for its defence. Against a free, an unanimous, a brave and loyal people, nothing can prevail. When we contemplate the fruits of union, the terrors of attack vanish. Could the whole power of the Spanish monarchy, in the 16th century, resist the exertions, or secure the allegiance of the Dutch, who in 1794 fell so easy a prey to the French? No; in the first instance, they were a band of patriots, headed by a race of heroes, resisting the chains of despotism: in the second, they were a degenerate, discontented people, corrupted by luxury and riches, willing to receive those chains again. To insure the success of an invading army, the spirit of the nation must be in favour of the attack. The French are convinced of this, and it was this conviction which, during the late unhappy rebellion in Ireland, prompted

prompted them to attempt the invasion of that kingdom, and which, notwithstanding their numerous armies, and the boasted superiority of their military skill, has dissuaded them from a similar enterprize against these realms.*

There was a period (I speak of twelve or fourteen months ago) when Europe had the flattering prospect of returning to the enjoyment of repose; when that tranquillity, of which she has been so long deprived, and the restoration of which she so much requires, to recruit her shattered strength, and to repair her accumulated losses, appeared to be at hand. I allude to the successful campaign of the Russians and Austrians conjointly, when the French were repulsed on every side; when they were driven, with ignominy, from the possession of

* When this pamphlet was begun, the recent disunion, and subsequent changes, in the cabinet, were not even surmised. Without at all pretending to prejudge the measures and competency of the present Administration, every one must deplore the loss of the most splendid talents, joined to the most unfulfilled integrity, which the country has lately sustained; more particularly at this juncture, when all Europe is arming against us, and we find ourselves called upon to unite every exertion, to assert our independence, and to vindicate our honour and our rights.

their

their victorious spoils; and were obliged to evacuate those posts which their valour had won, which their ambition had retained, and which their cupidity had ruined. The co-imperial arms were, in every quarter, crowned with success; and nothing but the disdainful and arrogant spirit of the French could have frustrated the wishes of mankind. This disposition must, however, shortly have yielded to the imperious calls of necessity, and such another campaign would have extorted from weakness, what justice was unable to accomplish.

A favourable termination of this unhappy conflict, which has so long desolated Europe, depended, no doubt, on various circumstances, but on no one so much, as the good faith of the emperor Paul. He had lately taken up the gauntlet, and joined the league, against the levelling and destructive views of France; and, had he proved true to his engagements, we should not, in all human probability, have now to deplore the disasters which have recently occurred. But it is the fate of most alliances, in which parties of different interests and designs are concerned, that nothing produces its promised

promised effect. Either their mutual jealousies and distrusts prevent them from acting in concert, or, if the general good prevail over private considerations, and this unanimity lead to success, still is that very success frequently the source of disagreements and animosities, which end in defection and disgust.

Thus it happened in the present instance. The gloomy and suspicious mind of Paul soon created doubts, concerning the policy of his conduct, in marshalling the forces of his empire against the French. His vanity naturally led him to consider himself as the arbiter of Europe, and he knew that, to whichever side he chose to incline, he could turn the current in its favour. He abhorred the French, but he also feared the preponderance of the Austrians; and, as they began to recover their strength, his fears of the former subsided, and his jealousy of the latter prevailed.

Impetuous in his temper, vehement in his hatred, ardent in his desires for success, when first he armed against the French, it was his determined purpose to complete their ruin. His preparations were proportionate to his an-

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tipathy, and he was resolved to muster all his strength to sacrifice them, at once, to his vengeance. Furnished with money from our court, he ordered levies to be made, with the greatest activity, in every part of his empire. The orders of a despot are promptly executed, and early in the spring of 1799, the Austrians were joined by a formidable body of Russian troops.

These rude and hardy barbarians, regardless of life, accustomed to fatigue, inured to every extremity of hunger and cold, rushed on their opponents with that incautious fury which an opinion of superiority inspires. Their loss was dreadful, but their career was not to be impeded. They marched over the dead bodies of their companions in arms, to the cannon's mouth, and, sword in hand, obliged their adversaries to retreat. Pillage was the object of their desires, victory was the means that insured it, and, like the ancient Germans, whose character the pen of Tacitus has so ably and so eloquently delineated, they were determined to conquer or die. The steady and patient courage of the Austrians tempered the hazard-

ous impetuosity of the Russians, and prudence secured what intrepidity had won.*

Towards the end of the campaign, which had been marked, in almost every stage of its progress, with the most signal success, the emperor Paul, without any remonstrance, without any notification of his intentions, without even assigning any reason for his disgust; contrary to every pledge of honour, and every appearance of form, suddenly deserted the alliance, and ordered his troops to return within the Russian frontier.

This precipitate and unexpected defalcation put an immediate check to the progress of the Austrians. The severity of the weather, shortly after, prevented either party from pursuing offensive operations. Whilst they remained in winter quarters, they both were actively employed in making fresh levies, and concerting plans against the opening of the ensuing campaign. The emperor raised a considerable body of recruits, but the exhausted state of the finances and population of his hereditary dominions, prevented

* It must, however, be observed, that, before their arrival, Kray had already gained several important victories.

his efforts from keeping pace with his zeal. Still, however, though less numerous than the French, his affairs, when his armies again took the field, wore, by no means, a discouraging aspect. On the Rhine and in Switzerland, they kept their ground, and Genoa, which had so long been a source of contention and anxiety, whose natural strength was so much augmented by the spirit of the inhabitants, and the determined valour of the garrison, was at last ceded to the steady perseverance of the Austrian and English arms. This event, so ardently wished for, was the last which Fortune chose to seal with her favour. Every thing has since been retrograde. Disunion in the cabinet has been attended by incapacity in the field, and the enemy, well knowing how to take advantage of these distractions, has in his turn been prosperous.

By what fatality Melas, who must certainly have been apprized of the powerful army Buonaparte was assembling to make head against him,* was induced to scatter his forces;

* Melas was informed, over and over again, of the force of the French, but he would never credit the report.

to make an excursion into France for the immaterial possession of Nice ; and, on his return, to risk the event of a general engagement with a superior army, are mysteries which have never been explained. They certainly were measures totally at variance with his usual prudence. At that moment every thing depended on his keeping his forces collected. Weakened as the Austrians had been by their exertions and victories, their only reasonable hope of ultimate success, was to act on the defensive till the fresh levies arrived. The maxims of discretion, which were so legibly inscribed, were, however, disdained, and this fatal and rash mistake was the fundamental cause of all the misery that has ensued. It was this blind obstinacy that was the immediate occasion of the battle of Marengo, and the dismal chain of disasters which have since befallen the Austrian arms. Nothing more forcibly proves how every thing that is human, the fate of empires as well as the fortune of individuals, depends on the turn of a moment than this remarkable battle. The Austrians, although inferior to their adversaries in number, flushed with victory, and proud of the laurels they had acquired,

quired, received the attack with the confidence of success. The French, headed by their favourite chief, who had, a few years before, led them on to victory on the same plains, emulous for distinction, and eager to disperse the clouds which had lately tarnished their fame, advanced to the attack with equal intrepidity. The struggle was furious, answerable to the efforts of two high-spirited armies meeting under such circumstances. After several hours of various success, during which the carnage on both sides was dreadful, the French were, at last, compelled to give way. Their wings were beaten:—victory was in the hands of the Austrians. Buonaparte, confounded with rage and despair, no longer preserved his presence of mind. He saw himself, for the first time in his life, abandoned for a moment by Fortune. He gave up everything for lost,* when a genius, superior to his own, totally changed the tide of advantage, and saved him and his army from destruction. The Austrians, considering

* The first courier that arrived at Paris, announced his defeat. A second appeared about an hour later, who brought the news of the victory.

the victory as gained, neglected those precautions which might have secured it. Intoxicated with their success, the common maxims of prudence were disregarded, and they were actuated more by the spirit of revenge than the sobriety of discretion. They weakened their centre, and began the pursuit. The penetration of Dessaix, who had just arrived, after a forced march of several leagues, with a strong reinforcement, immediately perceived the mistake, and what his penetration discovered, his firmness turned to his advantage. He collected his fatigued and scattered troops, and waited undismayed the Austrian attack. It made no impression on him. Confidence succeeded to consternation, and he finished by gaining a complete victory. In the arms of victory, like the illustrious Wolfe, he expired, lamented by every one but those who envied his fame. On so doubtful an event did the wheel of Fortune turn. The Austrians, completely routed, fled on every side; and when, the following morning, they collected the remnant of their army, they found themselves so weakened and reduced, that, from an absolute want of men, they were obliged to abandon

all

all the strong places in that quarter, the fruits of six months unparalleled hardship and toil.

Disheartening and unexpected as this severe reverse of fortune was, the cause was still far from being hopeless. A brave and well appointed army was still on the Rhine, to defend the empire from the aggression of the enemy. They only required a chief to command them. That want fortune had provided for, and fame had pointed out; but, caprice or intrigue, or, something worse than either, interfered with his appointment. The arch-duke Charles, one of the first military characters of the age, distinguished, even under every disadvantage, for his bravery and his skill, for his good conduct and good faith, for his public and private virtues; respected and feared by his enemies; beloved and esteemed by his friends; the choice of the people, the idol of the soldiers, a patriot and a hero; whose exalted birth silenced the clamours of envy, and imparted a weight and dignity to his station; this was the man on whom the eyes of all Europe were turned as the saviour of Germany; as the restorer of peace; as the worthy rival and opponent to the genius of

Moreau;

Moreau; and this was the man, (I blush for the infirmities of human nature when I say it) who, owing to some mean jealousies and paltry resentments, was rejected by the cabinet of Vienna.

Kray, an excellent and distinguished officer, already celebrated for his exertions and his successes, was the person fixed on (under, however, the same limitations which had formerly frustrated the views of the Arch-Duke) to supply his place. He received the command with diffidence. He wished indeed to decline it. He knew that his talents, which were perfectly competent to the command with which he had hitherto been entrusted, were insufficient to the duties of so responsible a situation; and that the prejudices entertained against him, on account of his birth,* would create innumerable jealousies, and materially oppose the success of his plans. Some trifling advantages, on the part of the enemy, occasioned his removal, and he was succeeded by men inferior to him both in experience and

* Kray is a Hungarian, and his parents were people of no distinction. talents.

talents. Every thing was yet to be remedied; but the blind obstinacy of the cabinet of Vienna was not to be convinced. They still persisted in refusing to make use of the services of the only man who was capable of serving them effectually, and the arch-duke John was appointed to this important trust. A young prince of great hopes, but of no experience, was sent to oppose Moreau, one of the most consummate generals which this age, fertile enough in military men, has produced. Eager for fame, so natural to a youthful and ardent mind, an engagement was rather courted than avoided. Tactics and skill prevailed over misguided impetuosity; innumerable errors were committed; and the battle of Hohenlinden was lost. The sensation which the news of this defeat occasioned in this country, too significantly proved its importance. What Marengo had begun, Hohenlinden completed. The Austrians fled precipitately in every direction, and their retreat was only stopped by an armistice, which surrendered all the strong posts, in the Tyrol and Franconia, into the hands of the French, and reduced them to a situation the most humiliating and deplorable

they have known since their capital was relieved, towards the close of the 17th century from the besieging Turks, by the successful arms of John Sobieski.*

When affairs were thus beyond the power of remedy; when every misfortune, which might have been averted, had occurred; then, the arch-duke Charles was appointed, unfettered by the trammels of the infatuated policy of the Austrian government, and invested with full authority to follow the dictates of his judgment. He was now allowed to be the only man whose integrity and genius could save the wreck of the Austrian affairs; a concession, not the result of generous conviction, but merely exacted by the desperate necessity of

* I have purposely rendered this narrative as concise as possible, and omitted entering into details which would have led me into an amplification inconsistent with the nature of this work. The interest of the many intermediate battles is, indeed, completely absorbed by those of Marengo and Hohenlinden. These were the melancholy events which ruined the Austrian cause. The defeat which shortly followed the battle of Hohenlinden and the convention of Steyer, although the arch-duke Charles then had the command, were the natural result of the decisive advantages the French had already obtained.

the times. The arch-duke accepted the offer, still wishing to serve his country, and to rescue it from the perilous situation, into which the weak councils of an incompetent administration had plunged it. If any thing could raise his character higher in the opinion of mankind than it already stood, his conduct on this occasion was calculated to produce such an effect; for, disgusted as he must have been by the impediments which had, all along, been thrown in his way, he has proved to the world, that the good of his country is paramount to every other consideration, and that no personal resentment can interfere with the discharge of so sacred and essential a duty.

The conduct and measures of the cabinet of Vienna have, indeed, been strange and unaccountable throughout. Decidedly in favour of the war, yet uniformly averse to those measures on the adoption of which the vigorous prosecution of it depended, from beginning to end, they have exhibited to Europe an uninterrupted series of practical errors. Thugut, who was the planner and mover of every public measure; whose influence had obtained a predominance which no opposition could con-

troul ; with the character of being an able and honest man ; and, decidedly, a strenuous advocate for the war ; has been guilty of indiscretions, and follies, and contradictions, which no ingenuity can reconcile, and which his warmest partizans are unable to justify or defend. Such, however, has been the case, and such have been the effects. Confidence has been uniformly withheld, plans have been continually varying. Nothing could be conjectured, even by those in the highest situations, before the orders were issued ; and the battles, in Italy and on the Rhine, were first fought over in a closet at Vienna, at the distance of several hundred miles from the scene of action.

It does not, however, appear, notwithstanding the alarming calamities of the times, that the Emperor has yet signed peace ; and desperate, comparatively speaking, as his present situation unquestionably is, the French probably will not find it prudent, by endeavouring to exact inadmissible terms of conciliation, to rouse the latent energies and resentments of his people. I know it to be an opinion very much abroad, that the French have only to march, to insure the possession of the imperial residence.

residence. I do not imagine that to be at all the case. Weakened and dispirited, but neither exhausted nor defenceless, the Austrians are still a formidable people, and such an attempt might prove fatal to the republican cause. Vienna, situated as it is in the heart of Austria, with fortifications which alone might occasion a protracted siege; with inhabitants who have given numberless proofs of their attachment to the imperial family, and of their abhorrence of the French; it would certainly be hazardous to exasperate the passions, and kindle the indignation of a brave and loyal people. In another point of view, the approach of the French, lying through a hostile country, groaning under the cruel scourge of war, and immediately suffering from the dreadful excesses which have, in all quarters, accompanied their course, the farther they advanced, in the same degree, would their difficulties and dangers augment. Even, supposing them to have surmounted these obstacles, and posted before the gates of Vienna, summoning the town to capitulate. Would the gates obey the summons? Not at all. The defence would be commensurate to the value of the stake.

stake. Who would surrender comfort and peace, for pillage and slaughter; a mild government for a tyrannical despotism; supportable taxes, for insupportable contributions? When personal happiness is concerned, all the energies of mankind arm in its defence. This opposition would allow time to the surrounding states to concert measures for the relief of the capital. Hungary to the west, Bohemia to the north, the Tyrolians to the east, the Italian states to the south--all warlike nations, and still capable of great exertions; these are the powers which would rise to rescue their country from a foreign yoke. The strength of Austria is humbled, but not broken. They have been defeated, but they have still a rallying point, and will never consent to prostrate themselves at the feet of an infatiable foe.*

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* The peace is, at length, signed, and the terms of it are before the public. Humiliating as they are to the emperor, yet they do not follow up the system of brutal annihilation, which has so strongly characterised the victorious proceedings of the French. Much more in truth has been conceded than, from the situation of the Austrian army,

These multiplied distresses and discomfitures of our only constant ally, of an ally that had adhered to the cause, and continued faithful to his engagements, through all the vicissitudes of fortune, have been followed by a general combination against us, the most shameless and unprovoked, that was ever exhibited to the astonishment of mankind. This period of depression has been long anxiously waited for, and, the moment it arrived, the secret machinations of the hostile powers of the North have been promulgated to the world.

Scarcely had the emperor Paul withdrawn himself from the alliance, than his partiality was converted into hatred, his admiration into affected contempt, and the principles of dis-

army, beaten as it was at all points, could have been expected. This, however, on the part of the French, is less a proof of moderation, than of prudence. They had two objects to accomplish. The first was, not to push the Austrians to desperation, by endeavouring to exact from them what they could not, without endangering their independence, submit to: the second was, to detach from us a faithful and honourable ally, that the whole of their vengeance and strength might be directed against the only enemy that has the power and the capacity to injure them.

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gust and revenge supplanted those of cordiality and friendship. Little more than a twelvemonth has elapsed since the time, when the British minister was the favourite of Paul; when his influence was unbounded; when no day passed without a personal interview; when no plan was concerted without his participation, no measure adopted without his approbation and advice; when the British government and nation were the theme of universal applause; when the exertions we had made for the preservation of social order were our best title to panegyric; when the British factory was intrenched by privileges which distinguished it from every other; when, whatever interfered with our interest, was lamented; and whatever promoted it was the subject of gratulation; when, even the birth-right of a Briton, as far, at least, as he was personally concerned, seemed to be transplanted to the shores of the Baltic, and he was, in most respects, as free at Petersburgh as at London; when, in short, every tie of amity and interest seemed to be as closely united, as the different habits and propensities of the two people possibly allowed.

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When we would investigate this mysterious subject; when we would inquire into the causes of this sudden and total alienation; if we were to be guided by the natural course of events, by the ordinary motives which induce such contradictory effects, all investigation, all research, would be useless. It is out of the natural and regular course of things to which men commonly refer, when they would reason on the general bias of human actions. All this would be unavailing speculation. It is to the paradoxical mind of this capricious monarch, that we must apply for an explanation; nor do we, by any means, furnish the first instance, in which the most cordial marks of friendship have been suddenly converted into the most unbounded enmity. The dark and suspicious features of his soul, the weakness and duplicity of his heart, are the palpable causes of these hasty contrarieties, and may account for those otherwise irreconcileable acts of profusion and benevolence, clemency and cruelty, by which his short reign has been chequered.

Lord Whitworth foresaw the storm gathering, long before it burst, and, abrupt as his dismissal was, it was less so than might have been expected from the known impetuosity of the emperor's character. At first, however, he conceived it necessary, in some measure, to dissemble, and the ebullitions of resentment were, for a short time, moderated by the maxims of prudence. These were finally deserted for the gratification of insult and revenge, and the moment, at length, arrived, when a plenary course was given to these mean passions. Previous to lord Whitworth's departure, it was proposed, in order to avoid an open rupture, and preserve some relations of harmony between the courts of London and Petersburgh, that Mr. Cassamajor, who had, for some time, been secretary of legation, should remain there, in the capacity of chargé d'affaires. This proposal was assented to, and within ten hours after the arrangement had taken place, as if purposely to aggravate the insult, a note from the governor of Petersburgh was transmitted to Mr. Cassamajor, inclosing a passport from the emperor, peremptorily

peremptorily commanding him, immediately, to quit the capital.

The surprise and confusion, which this unexpected requisition occasioned, may be easily imagined. All representation or animadversion was considered as useless. The orders were absolute, the compliance was unavoidable. Mr. Cassamajor, therefore, made what preparations, the short interval at his disposal permitted, to quit Petersburgh, the following morning, with Lord Whitworth; but such was the gross importunity of the police officers to hasten his lordship's departure, and so little respect did they pay to the character of a minister, who, for such a number of years, with so much honour to his country, and credit to himself, had represented the British nation, that he was obliged, to avoid insults which must have been publicly noticed, to hurry through the gates of the town, without all his necessary passports, and to wait several hours in the suburbs, till the appearance of Mr. Cassamajor permitted him to proceed on his journey. Such is the history of the final

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conclusion of the British mission at the court of Petersburgh.*

I arrived on the 21st of last June, just a fortnight after lord Whitworth's departure, and found every one lamenting the measure, as well on account of its being likely to interrupt the good understanding which, to their mutual advantage, had so long existed between the two nations, as on account of his lordship's private worth, which had, in a great degree, contributed to his public consideration, and which, amongst all classes of people, was the universal theme of panegyric.

A very little observation soon enabled me to form an opinion of the emperor's character, which, in different parts of Europe, I had heard so frequently discussed, and so variously represented. I was now on the spot, where I could ascertain what had long been an object of curiosity, the character of

* The moment lord Whitworth had passed the gates, the news of his departure was conveyed to the emperor, who had been outrageous at the delay, and was instantly pacified.

a man, who, by his inconsistencies, has challenged the attention of Europe, as much as Robespierre by his barbarities, or Buonaparte by his success. I heard it from many, drawn, indeed, with intended caution, but with that kind of caution which betrays the sentiments of the heart. It was portrayed by different hands with a similitude that left me no room to doubt of its identity. I found him despised as a sovereign, dreaded as a despot, and detested as a man. With all the weaknesses, with many of the vices, of human nature, these imperfections are not counterbalanced by any of those masculine and imposing virtues, which, without rendering defects venial, gloss them splendidly over, and screen them, if not from the notice, at least from the reprobation of mankind. His acts of favour and bounty are those of a man who has much to bestow, but who bestows without discrimination : his acts of cruelty, injustice, and tyranny, are those of a man who has an indefinite, uncontrouled power, which he is resolved to exercise ; his acts of caprice are the offspring of a mind, at times, completely deranged,

ranged, of feelings irritable to an excess and of an unmanly, cowardly, suspicious heart. The promotion of an enemy, or the ruin of a friend; the punishment of innocence, or the acquittal of guilt; the exaltation of a peasant, or the banishment of a noble; are events which depend, not on the merits or demerits of the parties, but on the momentaneous prejudices of a whimsical and infatuated despot. At Petersburgh, where every thing is, in a manner, under his own eye, the rigours of his government are inconceivable; and they are exercised in a way the most vexatious and revolting. In mixed societies, people dare neither act nor speak;—to think is scarcely safe. Politics and the emperor never become subjects of discussion, for spies, and informers, and police-officers, are at every man's elbow.— Every one suspects his neighbour, and is fearful to hazard an expression which might be interpreted to his disadvantage. The emperor's laws pervade, and regulate, every branch of domestic economy—nothing can be done without feeling his power. Even dress is one of the objects of his regulation;
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and the shape of a man's coat, or the manner in which he puts on his hat, are made matters of importance.* A government which descends to such trifling articles may be dreaded, but cannot be respected. When the emperor is in town, if you pass his palace, which is a long range of buildings, you must keep off your hat; and, what is still more ridiculous and humiliating, if you walk in a garden belonging to him, which adjoins the palace, you must remain uncovered the whole time.† If in a carriage, and the emperor happen to be coming, the moment his equipage appears, however great may be the distance, your coachman must instantly stop, and you must descend, perhaps into the mud, and remain in this degrading pos-

* Every man must wear a cocked hat, buckles in his shoes, a dress coat and waistcoat; and a young Englishman, lately arrived, and who was not yet acquainted with all the prevalent absurdities, was turned out of the opera-house by the police, because his hair was combed over his forehead.

† Police officers are in constant attendance for the instruction and discipline of strangers.

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ture till he is out of sight.* No person whatever, even on foot, is suffered at any hour, either of the day or night, to pass the gates of the town without a permission. You are stopped, and obliged to shew a printed paper, filled up, and signed by the governor, specifying who you are, and what is your business. These vexatious proceedings are frequently aggravated by the most wicked acts of cruelty; and whilst I was in the country, a Livonian clergyman received the knout, for having in his possession a prohibited book, and Kotzbue was sent half way into Siberia, for being the supposed author of a satire which he had never seen. I have only mentioned these few anecdotes to prove, how irreconcileable to the common feelings of nature any thing but aversion can be, to a man who has the privilege to do what he pleases, and who employs

* This ceremony is so much dreaded, that, when the emperor is in the metropolis, those who can afford it, depute a part of their servants to procure intelligence where he is likely to be met with, that he may be avoided.

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that privilege in enforcing only what is unreasonable and unjust.*

Such is the man who, from being our warmest friend, is become our bitterest enemy; who is at present the strenuous supporter and firm ally of the French; and who is the grand mover of the northern confederacy, which is to humble the pride of Britain; to reduce her power; to ruin her

* As a proof how much he is dreaded and detested, none of the principal nobility reside at Petersburgh, except those whose presence is necessary, from the situations they hold about the court. He is so conscious of his unpopularity, that, in order to create an imposing appearance, by exhibiting the number of his dependants, he obliges every person who holds an employment under government, even the lowest scribbler in the lowest office, to appear in the streets in a uniform, with a sword, an immense hat, and jack-boots and spurs. If any one wishes to form a just idea of this eccentric being, let him read the " Mémoires " *Secrets de la Russie.*" Most of the anecdotes are authentic, and I had heard them at Petersburgh before I saw the book. At Moscow, which the late empress used to call her république, and where, even in these times, a half-stifled spirit of freedom prevails, the abhorrence and detestation, in which this tyrant is held, are more easily discernible.

commerce; to destroy her very hopes; and, possibly, in his romantic imagination, to annex her empire to his own. I shall here take a cursory view of the resources of these northern states; of their internal situation; their military and naval force; their taxes and finances; which will ascertain, in some measure, to what extent they can injure us, and the total hopelessness, on their part, of ultimate success.

Russia, which is the pillar of strength on which this league is to repose, and from which it derives its principal vigour and support, in point of extent, and power, and resources, has an indubitable claim to the first place. Such, indeed, has been its rapid progress in improvement of every kind, that an inhabitant, who had lived a century back, could he be revived, would no longer recognize his country. When, however, it is shewn, that it is chiefly indebted for its present situation, to its uninterrupted connection and intercourse with Great Britain and its dependencies; and that, from the moment those relations cease, the most beneficial and permanent part of its resources will

be

be annihilated, and its commerce dwindle to decay; that situation will lose a considerable part of the alarming aspect which it at present assumes. From a review of the statement of the exports from the Russian empire in the year 1799, (the last that has been published,) it appears, that about three-fourths of the commerce of that country are carried on by the subjects of these realms.* The balance of trade, in favour of Russia, has been, for the last twenty years, rapidly increasing, and, averaged for the last five years, may be estimated as high as 14,000,000 of

* Of the principal articles, which are hemp, iron, and tallow, we took off, in the course of the year, of the first—of clean hemp 1,276,114 poods (a pood is 36 lb.), and of half-clean hemp 162,721;—of the second, 1,591,775;—and of the third, besides tallow-candles, 1,385,704. Of these same articles, for the above year, America, with all the other nations included which have a commercial connexion with Russia, took off, of the first—of clean hemp, 326,749 poods;—of half-clean hemp, 74,226;—of the second, 408,875;—and of the third, 138,332. Other articles, of inferior consumption, were nearly in the same proportion.

rubles* per annum, and for the same term the revenue, arising from the duties imposed on the various articles of importation and exportation; one year with another, cannot be calculated below 9,000,000.† These are the immediate benefits; but, regarded in a more general point of view, the result will be infinitely more favourable. It is, in

* A ruble, when the exchange is at par, is 2s. 6d. sterling.

Rubles.

† For the year 1796, the value of the exports at Petersburgh alone, amounted to	- - - - -	37,110,333
— of the imports -	-	26,355,890
Balance in favour of Petersburgh,		10,754,443

In the year 1799, 456 British ships were loaded at Peterburgh. The value of the exports for that year amounted to 38,169,925	- - - - -	38,169,925
— of the imports, -	-	20,173,263
Balance in favour of Petersburgh,		17,996,662

A very considerable trade, particularly in masts, hemp, flax and deals, is carried on at Riga and Narva, which is, in the same proportion, advantageous.

fact

fact, the connection of Russia with this country, that has principally contributed to advance it to its present pitch of opulence and political strength; to establish the foundation of its future grandeur, and to introduce those shades of civilization and urbanity which are at present apparent. It is this connection which pervades and animates every branch of national industry. Even the internal commerce of the country is carried on, chiefly, with British capitals; and the moment those capitals are withdrawn, the shock will be immediate, and the effects ruinous. What the general poverty of the country at first required, habit has reduced to system, and it is to this day a very usual practice to pay for the hemp and other valuable articles six months before they are received.* It is this advancement of money which secures the cultivator and the merchant from risk, and frequently enables the

* The contracts are made in December, January, and February, when part of the money, sometimes the whole, is paid, for goods which are to arrive at Petersburgh in the months of June, July, and August.

grower to purchase the seed, to bring it to perfection, and, finally, to deliver it into the hands of the factor at Petersburgh, to be prepared for exportation. I am aware, that this commercial intercourse, although so advantageous to Russia, is generally imagined to be absolutely necessary to us; and that, the instant the shipments of hemp, tar, masts, and other warlike stores, hitherto procured from the north of Europe, are discontinued, our navy, on which our strength and glory are built, must inevitably perish. This, however, is far from being the case; and the statement of a few simple facts will clearly and readily explain, that the continuation of this trade is interwoven almost with the political existence of Russia, and that, even if all supplies for this country were interdicted for a few years, we could still continue to manage without them.

According to the mode of present warfare, it is evident, that a nation, in a state of hostility, requires three or four times the revenue and expenditure of its peace establishment, and that it is necessary to provide some adequate means of raising those extraordinary

ordinary supplies. In every country, commerce is the most natural, the least oppressive, and most advantageous method, as it employs the industry of the lower classes of people; diffuses a spirit of emulation and discovery through the country; and draws a great portion of the fruits of these combined advantages from the wants, or desires, or superfluous wealth, of other nations. In a moral point of view, it also greatly promotes the general interests of the state. It makes active and industrious citizens: by rewarding the productions, it stimulates the efforts of ingenuity and skill; and, by polishing the taste, it influences the general manners of the people. Now, as the wants of a country are increased, its resources must keep pace, or it stands a chance of being soon reduced to a state of disorganization and bankruptcy. The peculiar situation of France, abundant in resources within itself; an old nation, long celebrated for its industry and ingenuity; already arrived at a high pitch of opulence, civilization, learning, and refinement; where the arts and manufactures were well understood, and had long flourished;

flourished; moreover, in a state of revolution which has transferred the property of individuals to the coffers of the public, and surrounded by rich and civilized countries, which have been, in turn, conquered and pillaged; the peculiar situation of France, I say, forms no exception whatever in favour of Russia, where the channels of industry are clogged with innumerable impediments; where scarcely any manufacture is established or understood; where the minds of the people are still in a state of savage ignorance, very distantly removed from that scale of advancement in the arts and comforts of life, which must precede those great national establishments which administer to public wants. If, therefore, Russia does not export her raw materials, she can derive no advantage from them whatever; and, as the growth must be regulated by the demand, the cultivators no longer finding encouragement, would discontinue their labours; the regular income of the treasury would cease; and, in the course of a few years, the country would be involved in one general scene of ruin and distress. Thus, it is evident,

that

that Russia, attentive to so important a branch of finance, must continue to export; and what escapes the vigilance of our cruisers, will naturally find its way, through intermediate channels, to the best market.* Still supposing: (for one may suppose any thing) that the rancorous enmity of the emperor, were so far to supersede his interest, that he were absolutely to interdict all exportation, and to raise the requisite contingents for the war, by the dissolution of personal rights, and the pillage of private property. From what has been already tolerated, one might almost argue that nothing will be resisted; yet the feelings of human nature, passive and obedient as they frequently are, would at last rebel; and such flagrant acts of tyranny and oppression would, certainly, remove him from the helm of affairs, long before we stood in need of fresh supplies from his dominions. The number of ships of war, we can at present fit out, is much more than a match for all

* What we get in a regular way will cost dearer; but what we capture will probably more than restore the balance.

the navies in Europe, and the stores we have still on hand, must be sufficient for the consumption of several future years.

But, even admitting that very circumstance should turn out as unfavourably as our worst enemies can wish; admitting that our intercourse with Russia were to cease for ever; and that, by no possible means, the king's warehouses and dock-yards could be replenished with stores from that country; still we are not cut off from every resource.—We have colonies of our own, which might be usefully employed in the cultivation of hemp and timber. The climate and soil of Canada are very similar to those parts of Russia which are most favourable to the growth of these valuable commodities; and it would be well worthy the consideration of gentlemen in administration (at all events) to turn their attention towards the establishment of a plan of such national advantage. Canada, which at present is a great expence, and perhaps no advantage, to the mother country, would then become of an importance continually increasing. Not only British capitals would

then

then be employed in the production of such important materials, but the profits would be entirely shared by British subjects. The revenue arising from the duties on these articles, would at the same time, greatly assist the finances, and, in the event of any future war with Russia, we should be perfectly independent of her.*

The emperor Paul, in consequence of the growing strength of his empire, and his extensive and valuable acquisitions in Poland and Livonia, is, at present, (as far as his military force is considered) the most powerful sovereign on the continent. He can bring into the field 500,000 men, who are raised with little trouble, and maintained at a small

* In the year 1790, when we were arming against Russia, and a rupture between the two countries was fully expected, it was the general opinion among the best informed people on the continent, that, if it had taken place, the final dismemberment of Poland would have been prevented; and the Poles, continuing our allies, or at least, having an interest always at variance with Russia, with one or the other, we should ever have been in friendship, and should have secured the receipt of these valuable materials.

expence.* Yet, formidable as this force is, and advantageously as it might be employed in a continental war, still, considering the number of soldiers which must remain at home, to preserve internal peace, in a country whose government is purely military; the number that is also requisite to watch the designs of their neighbours, along their extensive frontiers; the difficulty and expence of transporting a large army to a distant quarter of the globe; and, lastly, the utter impossibility of disembarkation, unless their transports are covered and protected by a superior force at sea; so many insuperable obstacles start up to separate them from this country, that the Russian army,

* * A Russian soldier is clothed once in three years, and his pay amounts to from seven to nine rubles per annum. He has besides, one pound of coarse rye-bread allowed him daily; and this, with salt and onions, is his only sustenance. This is, indeed, the general fare of the peasantry in Russia, and other northern countries, yet they are robust and healthy, which clearly proves, how very erroneous the ideas of the English are respecting the nutritive properties of different kinds of grain.

formidable

formidable as it is to its neighbours; as an instrument to be employed against Britain, is a consideration of little or no moment.

With respect to the state of the Imperial fleet, any fear from that quarter is so far from existing, that we must contemplate it as about to furnish a rich harvest, both of profit and glory, to our invincible tars. Were the emperor to collect his scattered navy, I imagine, he could muster upwards of forty ships of the line; but as he must, especially at this moment, keep up a considerable force in the Black Sea, to overawe the Turks, this number will be materially reduced. Still a large fleet remains. But, having ships, and making use of the two different questions; and, from the number left; you may deduct nearly a fourth, which are in so perishable a condition, that the first storm they encounter, will, in all probability, render unnecessary any further attack. He will find no small difficulty in properly manning and equipping the residue, for the Russians are far from being expert navigators; and, if they reckon on success from the good fortune that attended them

them in the Turkish war, they will soon find they have a different enemy to encounter. The best ships, and the best sailors, in their service, are those which continued so long in this country, where the former were repaired, and the latter instructed. Of the ships, they may, doubtless, make some use ; but such is the known predilection of the sailors for England, that the government will be cautious how it employs them against us.* In addition to this disordered and dilapidated state of their marine, so little is the art of naval architecture at present understood, that the two last ships which were built at Petersburgh, received such considerable damage in the launching, that, by the

* I was at Petersburgh when the sailors arrived from England. They spoke the language, and had a good deal the manners and appearance of British seamen. So superior did they consider themselves to their brother-sailors at Petersburgh, that they disdained to associate with them, and were always seen in knots together. They spoke openly in favour of England, and refused to throw aside their blue jackets and trowsers, notwithstanding the emperor had issued two orders to that effect.

time they were got over the bar,* they were so strained, and otherwise rendered incapable of service, that they were towed into dock at Cronstadt, to undergo a thorough repair.†

After

* The bar is a bank of sand which traverses the Neva, opposite the lower end of the English quay, and prevents any vessel from passing, which draws above nine feet water. To enable large ships to get over it, they are obliged to make use of camels—machines which raise them out of the water to the necessary height.

† At the launch of the Blagodat, the largest ship in the Russian navy (being pierced for 130 guns) and which now figures so conspicuously at the head of their marine list, I was present. It was the second attempt to get her into the water. The emperor had been greatly enraged at his first disappointment, for, on the signal being given to cut the shores, she did not move an inch. A person was, however, hardy enough to offer his services, and to pledge himself for the success of a second experiment. His proposal was acceded to, and a distant day was fixed on. In the interim, workmen were employed, and neither expence nor pains were spared to insure a fortunate issue. The emperor just about the time, happened to lose a grand-daughter, the only child of his eldest son, the grand-duke Alexander. As he dislikes going to Petersburgh on account of the cool reception he always meets with from his subjects,

After having thus slightly reviewed the military and naval forces of Russia, I shall now, however, speak of the emperor's subjects, (who, so far from crowding to see him, except something else is also to be seen, purposely avoid him) he appointed the same day for the burial and the launch, at both which ceremonies he was desirous of being present. The funeral took place early in the morning, and, by eleven o'clock, the emperor, attended by most of his principal officers of state, was in the dock-yard of the admiralty, once more in the hope of seeing the largest ship that had ever been built in Russia, descend into the water. So certain was he, that she would not disappoint his expectations, that he had filled his pockets with orders (of which he is known to be very lavish) in the view of rewarding those who had superintended the launch, and furnished him with so high a gratification. The bridge, and the opposite shore of the Neva, were crowded with spectators, to witness so extraordinary a spectacle, and to participate in the curiosity, rather than in the joy, of their sovereign. Every one was waiting in silent suspense for the signal. At last it was given. The ship began to move, which, when Paul perceived, he, immediately, interpreted it into the accomplishment of his wishes, and hastily put his hands into his pockets for the gracious marks of his favour. At that very moment, just as he had half produced them, the ship, after having sluggishly advanced about a foot, made a full stop. The emperor thrust his

now cursorily advert to the revenue and taxes, which are the foundation and support of this powerful establishment. The revenue of Russia, which, in consequence of the increasing extent of its commerce, has been, for several years, gradually improving, is generally estimated as high as 50,000,000 rubles, of which, as I have already observed, the duties on exportation and importation, amount nearly to one-fifth. In a government, which is supported by a gradual chain of despotism, extending, from superior to inferior, through all ranks, it is easy to

his orders back into his pockets, fell into a mighty rage, strutted up to his horse, mounted, and rode off. After his departure, very great efforts were made, during the whole of that day, to get her afloat, but in vain. They lowered her, indeed, till about half her hull was hanging over the water, and the other half was adhering to the machinery on shore. In this critical situation she remained about four and twenty hours, when, by mere dint of mechanical strength, they at last succeeded; but not before they had broken her back, started several of her beams, and strained her portholes in such a manner, that they exhibited, throughout, diagonal lines. I could not help congratulating the Russians, whom I already considered as our enemies, on their skill in naval architecture.

imagine on whom the chief burden immediately falls. The burghers, the free peasants, and the vassal-boors, all contribute their quota of imposts. Each male pays a capitation tax of from one to two rubles; and, according to the district he inhabits, is liable to more or less of personal duty. This is also one of the principal sources of revenue to the state. The others are, chiefly, the tax on public houses and distilleries; the excise and inland duties; the taxes on salt and wines; the duties on law proceedings, on stamps, and the fisheries. The nobility and clergy, till lately, were exempt from all direct imposts, but, since the accession of the present emperor, a tax on ground and houses in towns, has been levied; and a tax of 10 kopeeks a desatine,* on all landed property, is generally talked of. Favourable as this system of taxation apparently is to the higher classes, and oppressive to the lower, it is, ultimately burdensome to all; for, although the nobles are subject to little or no taxation in a direct point of view, indirectly,

A desatine is eighty fathom long and thirty broad.
they

they provide the money which is transmitted to the imperial treasury. The vassal-boors, by far the most numerous class of people, are in a state of the most abject servitude, almost entirely at the disposal of their masters, who may sell them, or exchange them, or transplant them, at pleasure; and may, lawfully, exercise any authority over them, short of the infliction of death. The value of an estate is estimated, not according to the number of acres it contains, but according to the number of souls (that is to say, male-slaves) that appertain to it. They have no civil rights whatever; their property is their lord's, and he may take the whole, or any part of it from them. It is he, therefore, who, in fact, pays the capitation tax: it is he who provides the labours that his peasants are obliged to bestow, on the reparation of the high-ways, the transportation of artillery, and other public works: the loss is his, when the army requires men, and his vassals are called upon to serve.* When all these

* This tax, particularly in time of war, is more seriously felt than any other, for every possessor of slaves

these circumstances are taken into calculation; when the relative poverty and barbarousness of the country are considered; when it is recollected how few opulent people are to be met with; how confined is the spirit of enterprize, or the diffusion of industry; it will be found, that the rich, in proportion to their means, contribute as much, the poor infinitely more, (for they contribute their freedom) to the exigencies of the state, than the inhabitants of this country.

is obliged to contribute his proportion to the wants of the army. In common years, about one in four hundred is the usual demand; but, in cases of extraordinary levies, it sometimes happens, that one in an hundred is taken. But as in the numeration of males, all ages and descriptions are included, and as the men provided for the emperor's service must be in perfect health and vigour, and between the age of sixteen and forty-five, the proportion he bears to others of that description is at least as one to twenty-five. A man of this denomination is generally worth from thirty to forty pounds, so that the Count Sheremeteyef, who is the possessor of 150,000 vassal-boors, sometimes contributes, in this way alone (reckoning each man on an average at the very moderate rate of thirty pounds) 1500 men, or £5,000l. sterling.

I remained at Petersburgh but about a fortnight after the launch of the Blagodat, and, five days after my departure, the first embargo was laid on the English shipping.*

From

* The day before I left Petersburgh, the emperor sent to Cronstadt, to know how many English ships were there, and which had received their passports. This message created much alarm, as it plainly indicated what measures were shortly to be pursued. A few days after, the embargo took place, and the British merchants, being summoned by the Governor of Petersburgh, were informed, that they were under arrest, and commanded to deliver to him, for the inspection of his master, an accurate statement of their respective properties. They remonstrated against the measure, and stated the utter impossibility of immediately complying with such an order. They were accordingly dismissed, and, the following day, police officers were sent round to demand the deliverance of their books, which were to undergo an examination by a committee appointed for the purpose. On, however, the arrival of a courier from Copenhagen, who brought intelligence that the dispute with us was, for the present, adjusted, the books were restored, and things, in some degree, resumed their former situation. This was the ostensible, but not the real motive; for, on enquiry, it was found that the most favourable opportunity for the detention of the British ships had not been embraced. This was the snare that was resorted

From Petersburgh I proceeded to Stockholm.

I had resorted to, and this was the reason of the first embargo being taken of, and the second being laid on, when there were 189 British ships, and nearly 2,000,000l. of British property at Cronstadt, Petersburgh and Riga. The whole of this property is sequestered, the ships are detained, and upwards of 2200 British sailors were, at an inclement season, marched into the interior of the country, where, if it had not been for the generous philanthropy of the British factory, they must all have certainly perished for want of clothes and food. All this has been done without either insult or injury, or the slightest provocation on our part, and in direct violation of a solemn treaty. The treaty of commerce and navigation between Great Britain and Russia, in 1766, which serves as a basis to that of 1793, declares in the following express terms, the privileges and protection to be granted to the respective merchants, in the event of a rupture between the two countries.

Art. 12. "If, what God forbid ! the peace should come to be broke between the two high contracting parties, the persons, ships, and commodities, shall not be detained, or confiscated; but they shall be allowed, at *least*, the space of one year, to sell, dispose, or carry off their effects, and to retire wherever they please; a stipulation that is to be equally understood of all those who are in the land or sea service; and they

I had already heard how completely the latter court was under the influence of the former, nor was it possible to avoid observing the coolness with which the English were treated. Our chargé d'affaires, Mr. Talbot, the successor to Mr. Hailes, had been there upwards of four months, without having been taken notice of by the king, and without an interview with any officer of state, till he had peremptorily insisted on an audience. All connexion with him, in his public capacity, was studiously avoided, and court days were put off to some indefinite term, that a plausible pretext might be framed for the delay of his introduction. Our conduct, relative to the Swedish convoy, and the right of search of neutral vessels, which Sir William Scott's decision, in the court of admiralty, had pub-

they shall farther be permitted, either at or before their departure, to consign the effects which they shall not as yet have disposed of, as well as the debts that shall be due to them, to such persons as they shall think proper, in order to dispose of them according to their desire, and for their benefit; which debts, the debtors shall be obliged to pay, in the same manner as if no such rupture had happened."

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lished to Europe, we were resolved to maintain, had exasperated the king to a degree of bitterness which his demeanour towards the English evidently betrayed. This system has, however, been, from time immemorial, adopted by the maritime states of Europe, each in its turn; whenever they have been in a situation to enforce it; is justified by the principle of self-preservation, and is supported by the opinions of the most distinguished writers on the subject.* It is true, that the extreme rigour of the law has, by treaty, to answer the particular views of different states, been frequently dispensed with; but this very circumstance of its becoming matter of negociation, corroborates the position, that the right already existed, and that the abandonment of it is purely conventional. It seems indeed to be reduced to this simple proposition. As long as

* *Vide* Grotius de Jure Bel. ac Pac lib. iii. cap 1. sect. 5. *Ib.* lib. iii. cap. 6, sect. 6, in notis.

Bynkershock Questionum, Jur. Pub. lib. i. cap. 14. Puffendorff, lib. viii. cap. 6, sect. 7, in notis.

Vattel, liv. iii. chap. 7, sect. 113 et 114.

Il Consolato del Mare, cap. 273—287.

independent states, declaring their neutrality, act up to this declaration, no other government has a right to interfere with the exercise of their independence: but as, during the times of war, the belligerent powers cannot, without search, ascertain whether vessels, sailing under a neutral flag, belong to the state whose flag they hoist; or, if ascertained, whether they are not carrying warlike stores, or other aid, to the enemy of that power: therefore, from the necessity of the case, the right of search has been established and admitted; and certain articles have been declared contraband, subjecting the said vessels, on discovery, to the penalty of confiscation. The fairness of this right is indisputable; for it is evident, that the moment a vessel, belonging to a neutral power, becomes the carrier of stores, or other articles of aid or molestation to your enemies, she, to all intents and purposes, departs from her neutrality; she favours your adversary, and injures you; and, on that account, should be considered and treated as a party in hostility against you. The Swedes, however, although they admit the right of search, in particular cases, deny the

general principle, and contend, that when merchant ships, whose cargoes have been regularly entered, and previously examined, at the custom-house, sail under convoy of a ship of war, we ought to be satisfied with the declaration of the king's captain. Now, it is, on very good grounds, suspected, that this fleet, about which the dispute arose, and the trial and decision in our court of admiralty depended, was sent out, merely by way of experiment; that the necessary instructions were given; that it was intended it should fall into our hands; and that the issue was foreseen. Of course, on the examination of the ships, when they were brought into our ports, nothing contraband was found on board. But, had we allowed ourselves to be over-reached by this feint, and at all relaxed in our determination to maintain the principle of search in all its rigour, who can pretend to say, that the Swedish government would not have connived at the illicit commerce of its subjects, and that regular fleets, at convenient seasons, provided with convoys, and protected by the Swedish flag, would not have become the carriers of the property of our enemies.

enemies. This, it appears to me, is the natural result of every inquiry into this important question. How much it behoves us to insist on its fulfilment, is equally clear. So much, indeed, in my opinion, does the success or failure of modern warfare depend on the aid and supplies received from other countries, that it seems, in the abstract, to be a fair and legal rule of action, in order to distress your enemy as much as possible, to intercept, if you can, all communication whatever with other states, provided you make good any damage or loss which may be sustained by such a general interference. All maritime wars must, from their nature, be felt more or less by those maritime states which are not engaged in the contest. This is an evil arising out of the very circumstance of war ; and as the jurisdiction of no country can extend to the high seas, and no superior tribunal is instituted to decide questions which may arise relative to the disputed rights of independent nations, we can only, in these cases, refer to the general practice of mankind.

These maxims, which have been the occasion of so much remonstrance, and have, of late, been so strenuously resisted by the northern states, have, at different periods, been as strenuously supported, and by none more so than by the late king of Sweden, during his war with Russia. We have also this additional plea to urge, in defence of the candour and impartiality of Sir William Scott's decision, that we only expect from other countries what, under similar circumstances, we should willingly submit to ourselves: and, in the event of any future naval contest, in which other states may be employed without our participation, we bind ourselves to observe those principles and regulations which, we now insist on, shall be the rule of conduct for others. The French, even since the commencement of the present war, when their navy was on a more respectable footing than at present, pushed this principle much beyond the extent which we claim. And at this very moment, is not the northern confederacy exercising a power much greater than we ever pretend-

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ed to, by obliging all neutral states to break off their commerce with us, and to shut their ports against our ships? These are the advocates for an enlarged system of neutrality! These are the champions who are drawing their swords for the protection of the rights of neutral nations! Who can observe their conduct, without perceiving their views?

But it is time to dismiss this question, and to turn our consideration to the situation and resources of Sweden, which we are now obliged to regard as an enemy. How little she will be able to cope with the power, and wealth, and spirit of Great Britain, and how fatal such a trial of her strength must be to her own interests, the following statement of facts will plainly demonstrate.

Since the death of the late king, whose wars, ambition, and profuseness, completely impoverished his country, naturally barren in resources, the finances have been in such a deranged state, that, notwithstanding the laudable economy which was adhered to, during the minority of the present king, and which has been persevered in since he took

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the reins of government into his own hands, to endeavour to redeem them, in some measure, from total ruin, the heaviest taxes have been imposed, and the harshest measures resorted to. Previous to the diet which was assembled at Norkoepling, in the beginning of the last year, and continued its sittings till the latter end of May, all ranks of people were discontented with the oppressive burdens under which they laboured, which their general poverty and distress could little enable them to support, and from a portion of which, the long duration of peace had afforded them the consoling prospect of being exonerated. So far, however, were the deliberations of this national convention from being occupied about the reduction of old taxes, that they were devising means for providing, by some uncommon exertion, for the alarming exigencies of the state, to which the increasing circulation of paper-money*

* This paper is at present in such discredit, that it is sometimes sold in Stockholm at public sale, and sustains a loss of from 40 to 45 per cent.

For the last year and a half I was on the continent, that is to say, from my arrival at Vienna till my return

had a good deal contributed, and which it was their firm purpose to diminish. The evil had taken too deep a root for any common application to remedy : and after much

turn to Hamburgh, after having travelled through Hungary, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, I never saw any thing but paper in circulation. That of the Austrian states is now in total discredit. In Russia it sustains a loss of 55 to 60 per cent.—In Sweden, of from 40 to 45;—in Denmark, of 25 per cent. What stronger proof can be afforded of the substantial credit of this country? The natural question arising from all these observations is, What is become of the specie of Europe? Multifarious causes have contributed to its disappearance, and in these times of uncertainty, the fears of individuals have not a little assisted. There is also another great and permanent cause, which, unless new mines are discovered to supply the deficiency, will, in the course of a few centuries, nearly annihilate these valuable metals. It is a well known fact, that the gold and silver, imported into Europe from America, are little more than answerable to the demand for the manufactures of this quarter of the globe ; and that this small surplus is by no means adequate to the wear and tear of these precious metals in coin, and to the restitution of the immense quantity which is annually exported for the productions of the east: so that they must be gradually becoming scarcer, and consequently of an intrinsically greater value.

serious

serious discussion, the following scheme was recommended by the king, and considered as the wisest and safest that could be adopted.

The paper in circulation amounts to 15,000,000 of rix dollars. The nominal value of the rix dollar (and the real value at which it was originally issued) is 48 shillings.* Each rix dollar is to be bought in by government, at the rate of 40 shillings in specie, making a deduction of one-sixth, or, on the whole circulating paper, of 2,500,000 rix dollars—12,500,000 will still remain; to diminish which, a contribution of two per cent. on all property is to be levied in the space of two years, viz. one per cent. each year, making an income tax, according to the rate of interest in Sweden, which is six per cent. of thirty-three two-thirds per cent. for the two years.† The taxable property

* A Swedish shilling is about one penny sterling.

† No description of people is to be excused from this tax, except those whose aggregate property does not amount to fifty rix dollars, or three rix dollars per annum: so that the poorest class must contribute their share, in the same proportion as the richest. How different

perty of Sweden is estimated at 250,000,000 of rix dollars, half real, and half personal. This tax will, therefore, produce 5,000,000 rix dollars, still leaving a balance of 7,500,000. Of this sum it is proposed, that 5,000,000 shall continue in circulation, and that the remaining 2,500,000 shall be extinguished by a sinking fund, for the creation of which additional imposts are to be laid. In order to insure the successful operation of this hazardous scheme, and to assist in bringing specie and bullion, as fast as possible, to the mint, the consumption of coffee and spirituous liquors,* which are procured from foreign

different is the principle and the operation of the income tax with us, where there is a regular gradation from 200*l.* to 60*l.* and where those who have an income below 60*l.* per annum, pay nothing.

* With regard to coffee and spirituous liquors, which have been supposed to drain the country of its cash, the government has acted on a totally mistaken principle. They still continue to be consumed in nearly the same proportion; and as they are now smuggled, they cost dearer to the individual, whilst, at the same time, the treasury is deprived of the duties formerly paid on their lawful introduction. The real fact is, when a country is impoverished to a certain

I degree,

foreign countries, and the use of all silks, except black and grey, are strictly forbidden ; and all persons, possessing plate or other articles in silver, exceeding, in weight, ten plots or five ounces, are required, without reserve or delay, to deliver them up for the service of the mint, which is only bound to pay, in return, their intrinsic value. These harsh and arbitrary measures have occasioned an universal clamour and discontent. When, however, the state finds it necessary to have recourse to them, at a time when all the ordinary objects of taxation are exhausted when the necessaries of life are at double their usual price ; when even bread is much scarcer, and dearer, and worse than with us ; and when there is no substitute for bread ; no one can doubt of the desperate situation of the country. If, moreover, this has happened to Sweden after an uninterrupted pe-

degree, not having a sufficient extent of commerce to recover itself, money becomes too valuable an article ever to be seen in abundance ; and, I am convinced, if Sweden had the means of making a coinage answerable to the demand, things would shortly revert to their present state.

riod

riod of ten years of peace, what chance of success can she possibly discover, even in the most remote perspective, arising from the events of a contest with us. An exhausted and impoverished country, without population, without commerce, without money, in short, without any of those means or resources which constitute the strength of a state, she can surely look forward to nothing but disaster, embarrassment, and disgrace. The Swedes have a fleet, it is true, and they possibly might be able to muster from ten to twelve sail of the line ; but how are they to be equipped or manned ?—and even supposing this doubtful event accomplished, how are they to contend against sailors who have been fighting, and conquering, for the last eight years ?

The third enemy that appears in review is another of the northern states, Denmark, which, in spite of the late explanation and partial adjustment of the disputed right of search, has, in violation of every maxim of prudence and good faith, ventured to join the confederacy, and enter the lists as a principal against us. By a reference to the con-

ferences which took place so late as the month of August last, between lord Whitworth and count Bernstoff, it will be seen, how anxious we were to continue on terms of friendship, and how far we were willing to abandon even some portion of our indisputable rights, rather than decide the question by force of arms. Our surprise then could not be but extreme, when, in consequence of a remonstrance delivered to the same count Bernstoff, on the 30th of last December, by our present minister at Copenhagen, Mr. Drummond, in consequence of strong suspicions of the general league that was then forming against us, a note was returned in answer, avowing that such a league had been entered into, whose determined object it was, to assert the independence of neutral states, and to maintain the doctrines of the armed neutrality in 1780, which decidedly resist all right of search, and contend that neutral ships make neutral property. This point has been already explained, and is, indeed, in general, sufficiently understood in this country; nor can the sophisticated arguments of Mr.

Schlegel,

Schlegel, nor the angry menaces of this northern junto, operate one jot to make us relinquish our pretensions. The Danes are no doubt interested in supporting the contrary doctrine, for it is by the sneaking evasion of this long-acknowledged, and long-practised principle of the law of nations, that they have, since the commencement of the present war, so rapidly advanced in opulence, and so considerably extended their illicit traffic. The manœuvres which have been practised by the merchants, and connived at by the government of that country, have been already exposed to public view, and in colours, however strong, not at all beyond the truth. At Copenhagen this traffic is notorious; and how we came not to be more jealous of our rights, and more peremptory in our demands, whilst the late negociation was pending, at a moment when we had a formidable fleet at anchor in the Sound, and could have enforced obedience, however a proof of our moderation *then*, is a circumstance rather to be regretted *now*. The Danes attributed this moderation to motives of prudence on our part, and absolutely imagined,

imagined, that we were fearful of the event, had we been adventurous enough to encounter their puny resistance.

In point of finances and individual opulence, Denmark is certainly on a very different footing from Sweden. An almost uninterrupted period of upwards of fifty years peace, which has been productive of much industry, and many wise and wholesome regulations of internal polity,* has contributed to diffuse through the country an appearance of comfort and civilization, very superior to what is to be met with in the other northern states of Europe. The Danes have also benefited, infinitely more than their neighbours, by the war. Their situation has secured to them advantages, which the stability and enterprize of their merchants have enabled them to turn to the best

* Nothing contributed so much to promote the general welfare of the country as the emancipation of the peasantry from vassalage, of which the present hereditary prince gave the first glorious example. To perpetuate the memory of so noble an act of generosity and philanthropy, the peasantry have erected, about half a mile from Copenhagen, an elegant monument in honour of their benefactor.

account,

account, and the seas, on which eight years ago, scarcely a Danish vessel floated, are now covered with their ships. Yet how can they injure us by war, so effectually as they have been doing, for several years past, under the pretence of neutrality? Should hostilities openly commence, from that moment their trade inevitably perishes; their supplies are cut off; their East and West India settlements are taken; their fleet is blocked up, captured, or destroyed; and away vanish also their golden dreams of national prosperity and greatness. I grant that they have tolerable arsenals and dock-yards, and a long row of line of battle ships drawn up before their city; but it is notorious to every person who has lately visited Copenhagen, that the greatest part of their fleet is, from age, rendered unfit for service, and is only indebted to the paint that covers it for the formidable appearance it makes. If Denmark can fit out, and man, twelve sail of the line, I think that may fairly be set down as the utmost extent of her exertions; and when the scantiness of her population, particularly of the northern parts of her dominions,

minions; is considered, and to which she must apply for her best and most active seamen, this will certainly be no trifling matter to accomplish.

But in what manner can they support the expences of a maritime war? The revenue, according to the largest calculations, does not exceed 2,000,000l. sterling, a great proportion of which, confessedly, arises from the duties on the different articles of her extended commerce. It is also this commerce, which, in its operation through the kingdom, enables the people to pay the heavy taxes that are laid on almost every object of internal economy. Yet is this revenue, flourishing as it comparatively is, scarcely adequate to the present exigencies of the state. By what means then, when these resources are withdrawn, can they support an establishment that will be attended with double or triple the expence? Her means would diminish in proportion as her wants augmented—the one would be the exact contrary of the other. Another very material branch of revenue, which would be intercepted, is the Sound dues, to which the

British

British nation alone contributes, annually, nearly 150,000l. What could supply the loss of these exuberant channels of wealth? The taxes are already sufficiently burdensome to the people. There is an excise duty on almost every article of life; provisions are scarce and exorbitantly dear;* and the produce of land, taken in all its shapes, according to a late calculation, pays nearly sixty per cent. In Norway, the most useful appendage to the Crown, the imposts are already so grievous, † that a spirit of revolt at present exists, which additional burdens would probably complete. This hardy and

* At Stockholm and Copenhagen, I was forcibly struck with the exorbitant price of provisions, particularly of bread, which, when its comparative quality is considered, is almost as dear again as in London, at present. In Norway, the scarcity of grain is, usually, so great, that the peasants, to add to the quantity, mix it with the bark of the fir tree, and grind them down together. At Christiana, whilst I was there, the finest wheaten flour sold at the exorbitant rate of one shilling sterling a pound.

† In Norway the excise duties are heavily felt, and the tax on timber, the principal produce of the country, amounts to from 10 to 50 per cent, on exportation.

noble race has been long oppressed by the Danes, and sullenly bears the weight of its chains. Their discourse and their national songs breathe a spirit of liberty and indignant pride, which plainly indicates how willingly they would avail themselves of a favourable opportunity of throwing off the yoke. Here is another vulnerable part which would occasion no trifling alarm to Denmark, and suggest the prudence of augmenting its military force, for the defence of its possessions at home.

From the foregoing circumstances, it does not appear that we need harbour any very serious apprehensions from that quarter. The Danes will have enough to do to protect themselves. Even their capital is not so secure from attack as is generally imagined, and the enterprising spirit and superior skill of our sailors will, possibly, be able to accomplish what, at this moment, is little dreamt of.

With regard to the king of Prussia, who is also suspected of having, under certain conditions, joined the general confederacy against us, if he rightly understands his own interest,

interest, he will not provoke a contest from which he may lose much, but has nothing to gain. His strength, potent as it is, cannot come in contact with ours. His armies, numerous as they are, cannot molest us, nor protect him from our molestation. His infant commerce, from which he is daily deriving such solid advantages, which is the source of so much present prosperity and future hope, will be instantly sacrificed. That preponderance and growing greatness, which he has been able to obtain among the continental powers, have been occasioned, chiefly, by his remaining at peace. Whilst his rival the emperor has been accelerating his downfall by the ruinous efforts of a fourteen years war, he has had leisure, since his accession, by studiously avoiding to embroil himself in continental disputes, to repair his finances, to advance his manufactures, to extend his trade, and to promote the general interests and prosperity of his country. It has been owing to a chain of unforeseen and adventitious circumstances, that he has been placed in a situation to remain in repose, with security, and such a recurrence of

circumstances

circumstances is not to be expected. How unwisely then would he act, when, for the possession of Hamburgh (the only bait the confederacy can hold out) which he possibly might again lose, or which he possibly may acquire without involving his country, in the miseries and precarious contingencies of war, were he to incur such risks, or forfeit the possession of such advantages. If, therefore, he be directed by prudence (for morality in politics seems to be, now-a-days, completely set aside) he will continue to observe towards us and the rest of Europe, those pacific sentiments to which he has so long and so successfully adhered.* Should he, however,

* This is the safest line of conduct which necessity seems at present to prescribe to the king of Prussia. He has indeed, more than once, had an opportunity of acting a great part on the theatre of European politics: but from the operation of a selfish and unbecoming policy, it has not been embraced. He might, almost without risk, have restored the balance of power in Europe, and repressed the preponderance and gigantic views of France, before which every continental government may one day tremble. Even so late as the month of September last, when our unfortunate expedition against Holland was made, if he had list-
ened

ever, be guided by other views, we know his strength as well as our own.*

After this slight sketch of the different states, by whom we are likely to be attacked, let us turn our attention to the power and resources of the British empire, a theme on which (notwithstanding the many existing circumstances which are so deeply to be regretted) every Briton must dwell with exultation. What our situation might have been, had we continued at peace, is, at best, but matter of conjecture ; what it actually is,

ened to the remonstrances of our court, and sent but twenty-five thousand men to co-operate with the allies ; the French would, infallibly, have been driven from their Batavian conquest ; the Stadholder would have been restored ; and Europe might, at this moment, have been enjoying the blessings of peace.

* The idea, of entirely excluding this country from any commercial connexion with the continent, is preposterous in the extreme. The ordinances of sovereigns cannot successfully oppose the interests or prejudices of mankind. Our manufactures, and the productions of our colonies, are absolutely necessary to other parts of Europe. Nor can a stronger proof of this be required, than the direct trade which is at present carried on from this country to France, and at which the French government is politic enough to connive.

after

after sacrifices and exertions unparalleled in the annals of mankind, we know and feel. The natural course of things is no longer to be looked for : we live in an age of wonders; and future generations will, probably, treat the events of these days as the recorded productions of a fanciful imagination. When, or how, this eventful scene is to conclude, speculation itself almost declines to calculate ; for at the moment when we were looking forward to the cessation of our labours, we find fresh foes starting up to assail us. At no period of our history have we been so completely surrounded by enemies. Which ever way we turn our eyes we can descry nothing but hostile preparation. Even Naples and Portugal must yield to the urgent pressure of the times, and after having recovered the independence of the one, and so long protected the rights of the other, they are obliged to shut their ports against us. We see all Europe jealous of our power and greatness, abandoning all received maxims of morality or policy, rising up in arms, and preparing a general crusade against us. It is a scene of interest and solicitude, but

none

none of terroir or despondency. The blow may be meditated, but it will not succeed. We have within us both the means of defence and annoyance, and the fortunate termination of the conflict still hinges on ourselves.

The origin of the war with France now becomes a secondary question, and however some people may still continue to dispute about *that*,* in this instance, there can be no doubt which party has begun the attack. In the records of mankind, there never was so shameful and unprovoked an act of aggression. The dispositions of our government to preserve the relations of peace, by explaining away, at different times, the repeated insults that have been offered us, have been too evidently published to the whole world. The tameness with which they have, under various pretences, been

* If any one, however, still entertains doubt on that point, let him refer to that masterly publication of Mr. Herbert Marsh, entitled "The History of the Politicks of Great Britain and France." He will there find sufficient argument to convince the most sceptical mind.

borne,

borne, has proved our earnest desire towards conciliation, has even proved, that we had the disposition to submit, when we had the power of chastisement, and that we were willing to bear every thing but absolute disgrace, rather than rekindle the flame of general war. We have till now, I am sorry to say, acted with a pusillanimity quite inconsistent with our character, and tamely tolerated indignities, which, had we consulted the honour, the independence, or the interests, of the empire, we should long since have repelled. Had we acted a year ago, as we are acting now ; had we *then* shewn a firm determination to resist every incroachment on our rights ; this confederacy would, in all probability, never have existed, or if it had been formed, it would, before this, have been dissolved. We have not been sufficiently watchful of events. The success of a plan frequently balances on the moment of attack, and procrastination often ruins, what decision and promptitude may insure. When the emperor of Russia dismissed the English minister, and every person concerned with the mission ; when he refused to accede to the

the appointment of a successor ; his disposition to become our enemy was plainly demonstrated, and it certainly was not difficult to foresee, in some measure, the events that have followed. A bitter enemy, a treacherous friend, a pretended hero ; with ambition but without courage; the tyrant of his empire and his family ; a being, endowed with a certain acuteness of discrimination, and readiness of action ; sanguine in his hopes, but wavering in his perseverance ; irascible, vain, foolish, and dignified, by turns ; with a generosity bordering on prodigality ; and a meanness which only consults his own gratification ; a platonic lover,* a sentimental despot, a metaphysical

cal

* Madame Chevalier, the French actress at Petersburgh, is not, as is generally imagined, the mistress of the emperor, but of Kutaizoff, a renegade Turk, who was formerly his barber, but is now one of his principal advisers, and his confidential friend. Wonderful revolutions in politics have frequently been brought about by women, and how far the predominance of the French interest is to be ascribed to the exertions of this lady, I shall not pretend to say. The emperor's favourite is the princeps Gagarin, but it is said to be

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merely

cal legislator ; this is the man, who has been destined by his inconsistencies, his absurdities, and his injustice, to rekindle the flame of general war; to irritate the subsiding animosities of rival nations; and to revive those tragical scenes which have so long desolated the fairest portions of the globe. That such a man should be possessed of such influence is a most lamentable instance of the caprice of fortune, who has raised to the most exalted situation, the person, in his empire, the least worthy of such a distinction. Sweden and Denmark are now entirely at his mercy, and it is possibly their destiny, in the course of a few years, to be blotted out from the list of independent kingdoms, and to be laid down in some future map, as the appendages of the Russian empire. If they had perceived and understood their own interest, they would have embraced the only favourable opportunity that may, possibly, ever occur, of leaguing against their common enemy,

~~merely~~ a platonic passion. Paul is, indeed, in every respect, such an antidote to love, that, at least, on the part of the lady, this report may easily be credited.

whose

whose growing superiority has, for many years past, menaced their existence as independent states.

The resources, the power, and the means, that can be brought against us by the united efforts and malevolence of this unnatural coalition, have been already stated. How they may be opposed by the British empire, and with what chance of success, remains to be shewn.

In almost every war that we have waged, since the foundation of the monarchy, it has been our fate and our glory, to contend against nations more extensive, more populous, and more fertile, in natural resources, than ourselves. But the genius, the courage, the industry, and the perseverance of the people, have been more than adequate to counterbalance these disadvantages. Our safety and independence have never been endangered. We have sown in the field of labour, we have reaped in the field of fame. If this has been the case in former wars, how much more likely to excite us to the preservation of past, and the acquirement of future, renown, is the situation of

this awful moment, when we find a combination of all that is base and profligate formed against us, to accomplish our ruin. The principal robbers of Europe,* not satisfied with the spoils of injustice which have been wrested from the possession of the disunited or defenceless, misled by their avarice, and elated by their hopes, have been beating up for coadjutors, to enable them to proceed in the career of plunder, till they have humbled the pride, blasted the prosperity, ruined the happiness, and divided the wealth, of this enviable and envied isle. The golden dreams of imagination, no doubt, anticipate the fulfilment of their wishes; but the energy and resources, the wisdom and integrity, the patriotism and public spirit of this country, will not only insure a phalanx of defence, but a host of attack. A Briton and a slave! These are terms which no figures of rhetoric, which no subtilties of sophistry can

* I allude to Russia and France—The former was the chief instrument both in the first and the final dismemberment of Poland; the latter has faithfully copied the plan, but has executed it on a still more extensive scale.

reconcile, or render for a moment, even in their appearance, congruous. With a military force of three hundred thousand men, with a navy of 196 ships of the line, and 617 ships of war of other denominations; with 120,000 veteran seamen, who, for the space of eight years, have been familiarized with danger and victory, and whose recent achievements have eclipsed the splendor of former fame; with a rental of 200,000,000; with a revenue of 35,000,000; with a population, increasing in spite of the desolation and obstructions inseparable from war; with a commerce, surpassing all precedent in the history of mankind; and extended, with success, to every quarter of the habitable globe; with all the colonies of the west, and the undisputed empire of the east; with a spirit and hardihood of enterprize which nothing can controul; with a confidence of success which nothing can dismay; courageous without being arrogant; wealthy without being enervated; refined without being debauched; devoted to the prosperity of our country and constitution, and attached to them from an experimental conviction of their

their superiority :—what have we to fear ? Let these coalesced powers measure their strength with ours they will then find how difficult it is to subdue a people who are united by the indissoluble bond of patriotism, and resolved upon every sacrifice for the preservation of their religion, their independence, and their rights.

Consolidated as the empire now is, we shall be able to marshal our forces with double effect. Ireland, from being a suspected friend, lately the source of so much uneasiness, and the cause of so much bloodshed, has, I hope, buried her jealousies and dissentions in oblivion ; and, identified as she now is with us, can have no views but those which are calculated to promote the honour and welfare of the common-weal. As she will share the anxieties and the perils, so will she share the advantages and the glories ; and the rewards of past achievements and future prosperity, will henceforward be equally divided.*

Our

* As far as relates to the important question to which the late unfortunate disunion in the Cabinet is to be chiefly

Our adversaries have long hoped to exhaust
the

chiefly ascribed, it is much to be lamented, that its discussion was not deferred to some more auspicious period. That the emancipation of the catholics, although no public pledge was given, was held out as a measure which would, naturally, follow and consolidate the union, the many interesting debates, on this grand object of general concern, fully evince. All the most odious and oppressive parts of the test act have, indeed, been, long since, done away, nor do those fears any more prevail which were the original occasion of their enactment. We no longer confound papists with catholics, and are convinced that the latter can, in all respects, fulfil the duties of good and loyal citizens. To this conviction are the concessions already made in their favour to be ascribed. They can now serve in the army and navy; they can sit as magistrates; and they have the elective franchise. If these privileges have been granted, during the present reign, without interfering with the king's coronation oath, on what principal of reasoning can that oath be considered as an insurmountable impediment to their entire emancipation? The constitution certainly has a power to exonerate the king from any scruples (when-ever the exoneration shall be deenied necessary) which the literal interpretation of the oath seems to have occasioned. A fundamental law that can never be altered or amended, is a solecism in government. All laws arise out of the circumstances of the times, and are meant, to consult the convenience, and administer to

the finances,* and tire out the patience, of the nation. That the general wish

is

to the advantage, of the body politic. It is deeply to be regretted, that the king, whom every one must love and revere, both on account of his public and private virtues, should not, on this occasion, have been better advised, and that a schism should have taken place, which, at this peculiarly unfortunate crisis, may be productive of considerable mischief.

* With regard to our finances, nothing can furnish a stronger proof of their flourishing state, and the confidence of the public in their stability, than the triumphant terms of the loan for which Mr. Pitt so lately contracted; nor can any thing more forcibly demonstrate, how easily a provision for future exigencies can be created, than the nature of the new taxes, which, without being materially felt by any class of people, will produce 1,730,000. Indeed, it is a fact beyond all controversy, that, notwithstanding the unparalleled expence of this war, and the consequently rapid increase of the national debt, the country, distinct from the government, was never so rich. Individual opulence has increased in exact proportion to public want. And there is an evident reason for this. Our trade was never so prosperous or so extended; and, deducting the amount of our subsidies, the immense sums which have been raised and consumed, in the course of this contest, have been circulated through every part of the empire

is for peace, I do not pretend to deny. After so long and arduous a struggle, which has

empire. The money has remained in the country ; it has only changed hands ; and a considerable portion of it has been converted from a sleeping into an active capital. The public spirit of a great nation, when its political existence is concerned, is able to accomplish every thing, and the exhaustion of its resources, as long as that public spirit remains, is an event hardly to be looked for.

The possession of the island of Malta is an object of the highest importance to the commerce and maritime superiority of this country, for it not only materially interferes with the aggrandizing views of the French, but it insures, an indisputable command of the trade of the Mediterranean, and an intercourse with the different ports of the Archipelago. The favourite object of the emperor Paul is the possession of Malta ; the favourite object of Buonaparte is the colonization of Egypt ; and it is generally understood, that they have, mutually, guaranteed to each other their respective domination. The former is already secured to us, and the expulsion of the French from Egypt would be no unimportant object to accomplish : for, once firmly established in that quarter, they will be a constant source of anxiety and annoyance to us. The Turkish monarchy seems to be tottering on the verge of dissolution, and that obstacle removed, Russia and, France united, may, possibly, in the end, shake the sta-

has been carried to such a rancorous pitch of animosity and party-rage; which has deluged the continent, and stained the ocean, with blood; which has been attended, in its course, with pestilence and famine, with crimes of every kind, and distress in every degree; every man of feeling must wish to let the curtain drop, and close the afflicting scene. But the measures of conciliation are not always those of mercy, and, unless they have justice for their basis, can only be the origin of more obstinate contention. For a fair, and honourable peace, I should be, and have ever been, an advocate; but for any thing short of that just object of our hopes and sacrifices, I would reject it with a scorn equal to the insult offered by the proposal. A nation that will easily sacrifice its

bility of our Indian empire. At present, there can be no reasonable ground of alarm. Guarded by a brave and well-appointed army, flushed with a long and uninterrupted course of victory and success, and loaded with the spoils of subjugated realms, we may repose with confidence on their valour and skill; but I am fearful, if the French be suffered to remain in Egypt, of looking too far forward into futurity.

honour,

honour, is ripe for every other prostitution? Are we so abject, are we so dismayed, are we so contemptible, as to listen to terms of disgrace, and apply the seal to an act of humiliation? Where is the equity, where is the policy, where is the necessity, of subscribing to such a measure? Let us take a survey of past events; let us examine the present state of things; and then decide. Scrutinize the question well, sift it to the bottom, leave no motive unreviewed, recollect every circumstance of the war, and what will you discover? Nothing but what ought to animate us in the career of glory, and to make us disdain the thoughts of submission. If we have been unfortunate in some respects; if we have failed in some of our expeditions; we have succeeded in others; and our good fortune has, on the whole, restored the balance an hundred fold. What has the enemy wrested from us?—Nothing—in our public capacity—absolutely nothing of importance! Let us next inquire, what we have taken from them. From France 45 ships of the line, and 275 frigates and sloops. We have annihilated her very interest and name in the

east; we have dispossessed her of her colonies in the west; we have completely ruined her commerce; we have taken the island of Marcou, but seven miles from her own coast, which she has since, after several months preparation, in vain attempted to recover; and lastly, we have reduced the island of Malta, one of the strongest fortresses in the world. From the Dutch we have taken 25 ships of the line, 64 frigates and sloops, the Cape, the colonies of Demerary, Iseequibo, Berbice, and Curacao, in the West Indies, Surinam in South America, and the spice islands in the east. From the Spaniards we have taken 8 ships of the line, 67 frigates and sloops, Trinidad in the West Indies, and the island of Minorca in the Mediterranean.* Hitherto this is an account against which our enemies have scarcely any thing to set. The Russians, Swedes, and Danes will, I make no doubt, shortly, increase the balance in our favour.

If, after an eight years war of unexampled exertion, expence, and animosity, such is

* Their possessions in South America are also a very valuable point of attack.

the situation of the contending parties; if every plan and stratagem which rancour and ingenuity could invent, to humble the pride, and endanger the independence, of these realms, have proved abortive; if, amid all these efforts, surrounded as we have been by open and secret foes, we find that we have weathered the storm, that we have been able to provide for every exigency, and have given ample proofs that our vigour is still unimpaired, why should we be the first to yield? Would such a desertion of the cause, for which we have been so long contending, be consistent with our interest, or consonant to the calls of honour and duty? We have already, more than once, shewn our desire of peace, by making the first advances. Our proposals have been rejected with scorn, and it would ill become our dignity or our rights to subject ourselves again to such insults. In consequence of many recent unfortunate events, much blame has been imputed to the late ministry, for rejecting the overtures to negotiate which, a few months since, were made by Buonaparte. Had we been perfectly convinced of

their

their sincerity, it would have been totally incompatible with the character of this nation, to have listened to them in the shape in which they appeared. The preliminary article* required what was altogether inadmissible, what we could never accede to, and was of itself a sufficient reason for rejecting the whole. Nor, indeed, can it be imagined that the French chief consul wished that we should be deceived. This crafty politician, who had, but a few months before, seized on the helm of state, found it necessary to dissemble; and, by pretending to desire the restoration of peace, to endeavour to calm the spirit of faction at home, to increase the national hatred towards us, and, by making us the apparent obstacles to the wishes of the people, to establish his own popularity. He knew too well the use of an army employed against an active enemy; he knew too well the danger of recalling that army, from the indulgencies of pillage and luxury, to the rigid discipline and industrious duties of civil life, to be anxious that the

* A naval armistice.

experiment should be made. It was a desperate stake for which he was playing. It depended on the turn of a die, which chance decided in his favour. That Buonaparte is an extraordinary character no one will deny; that he is a man of uncommon talents, though more problematical, few will be inclined to doubt; but that his fortune has been superior both to his talents and his merit, is still more certain than either. This is the goddess to whom he has devoted his labours, and whose favour has exceeded his devotion. She has (if I may for a moment, in a work of this kind, be allowed to indulge in allegory,) led him every where by the hand. She crowned him with laurels in Italy; she screened him from the vigilance of the gallant Nelson, and landed him, with his army, on the coast of Egypt. When his men were perishing around him from pestilence and want, she protected him from their influence: she rescued him from the avenging hand of the intrepid Smith: she transported him, as a fugitive, from the shores of Africa, and placed him on the throne of France: she turned the tide of victory

victory against the Austrians at the battle of Marengo, and, after Dessaix had contributed to that splendid achievement, dispatched him, that the laurels might grace Buonaparte's brow. The part which this extraordinary character is acting, is nearly similar to that which Cromwell, in the 17th century, played in England. He only does not make use of such hypocrisy, and has taken care to secure to himself infinitely more power. What king of France, even in the plenitude of arbitrary sway, ever possessed so much ? Is not every office of trust or patronage, of power or emolument, entirely at his disposal ? Is not every military and civil department filled with his dependants or friends ? Who does not tremble when he frowns, or where is the patriot who dares raise against his government his suffocated voice ? No ! it is the uncontrolled licence of a few, oppressing and tyrannizing over the great majority of the people, whose groans and cries are stifled amidst the clamour of purchased applause, and the shouts of destructive triumphs. What are we to think of the boasted freedom of a

govern-

government, purely military, under which every citizen is dragooned to his duty; where, if any laws exist, they are written with the point of a bayonet, and may be altered, or expunged, or interpreted, as present interest requires, or present fancy suggests. Where is all this to end?—whither is all this to lead? Complicated as the business is, the mind loses itself in the mazes of conjecture, and is confused with the conclusions of its own reasonings.

Such have been the fruits of the French revolution! Its paroxysms have vibrated to the remotest regions of the civilized world. It has diffused blood and devastation over the face of the globe. It has alarmed, or shaken, or subverted, every regular government of Europe. It has sapped the foundations of domestic enjoyment, and polluted the source of social life. By the folly, or wickedness, or ambition of its successive leaders, it has been converted into an instrument of vengeance and persecution, which many future generations will have to lament. Even when its own acrimony and fury shall have completely relaxed its active

powers, and its nerveless arm can no longer carry into execution the dictates of a degenerate and cruel mind, its effects will still remain, as an awful monument to mankind of the danger of deserting the habits and maxims of an ancient government. In another point of view, and not the least inconsequential, the mischiefs, which have emanated from this fatal insurrection against the rights and enjoyments of civilized life, are incalculable, and have contributed more than any other event, that could possibly have occurred, to retard the progress of refinement, and with it the liberties and happiness of mankind. Even in those countries where the people was least respected, and where the executive arm of the government was furnished with the most uncontroled sway, more possibly from indolence and habit than from any principles of humanity and justice, a mildness was gradually introducing itself, unknown to former ages. The rigid maxims of coercion were relaxing into something of a gentler nature. The body of the people was beginning to acquire a weight and consideration, to which they

had never before aspired; and every thing was tending, by imperceptible degrees, towards a system of melioration. But what has happened in France, has, in those countries, so completely demonstrated the necessity of checking the exertions of experiment; and the inquiries of investigation, that we are not to be surprised if a principle of self-preservation have induced those who direct the operations of government, to adopt strong and rigorous measures to resist the introduction of those alluring but false doctrines, which aim at the subversion of all constituted authority, and the dissolution of all regular maxims of tranquillity and subordination. Fortunately for us, the peculiarity of our situation and government placed us beyond the influence of this devouring vortex. We might listen with safety, when others would be lost. We had been bred under the protection of freedom, and its practical knowledge had guided our meditations on its speculative use. We perfectly comprehended the distinction; and notwithstanding the seductive arts that were indus-

triously propagated to mislead us, we were not to be estranged, by the specious promises of innovation, from the solid advantages we already possessed.

It is not a philosophical treatise, it is not an arithmetical calculation, it is not the mere assertion of a designing demagogue, nor the pretended inspiration of a canting declaimer, that can teach to the British nation what happiness and liberty are, or prevail on us to believe that they are banished from our shores, and placed beyond the sphere of our action;* that can render us discontented with

* If, indeed, our liberties are rather more confined than they were a few years back; if parliament has thought proper to lay restraints that were, formerly, never thought of; whom have we to thank for these changes? Not peaceable and well-disposed citizens; not the friends of their country; but those who have been active in promoting sedition, and aiming at the subversion of the constitution; those who would enjoy the plenitude of licence themselves, that they might tyrannize over the rights of others. I never knew a modern republican who was not a despot. The Sultan of Turkey, and the Czar of Russia, as far as concerns themselves, are pure republicans; so was Robespierre, and so is Buonaparte.

the

the solemn legacy which our ancestors bequeathed to us, and which our guardianship has defended and preserved ; that can induce us to make alterations, in order to explore the regions of undiscovered blessings, and quit our own firm and venerable palladium, to visit the tottering temples, and bow before the false shrines, which have been erected in foreign lands. The time of effervescence, and doubt, and anxiety, on this point, is, thank God ! past. The slow but sure progress of experience and reason, has subverted all the airy structures of the modern schools, and proved to the world their inanity and mischief ; has shewn the danger of abandoning even what is bad, for something only better in speculation ; has explained how the name, and outward garb of liberty, can be insidiously drawn on, to cover the most odious and wicked acts of tyranny ; and has taught a lesson of caution which, it is to be hoped, no future generation will forget.

I admire the doctrines of modern reformers, who are continually telling us of our burdens and distresses, and recommending

ing fresh experiments every day.* But if we change, it is likely we shall adopt the maxims and government of some other country ; or are we to discuss the theories of metaphysics, and wander about in the labyrinths of conjecture, till chance decide on something worse ? Are we to commute our parliaments, whose deliberations have so often rescued the nation from perdition, and on whose integrity and wisdom, in this time of peril, we place our chief reliance, for the subservient diets of Poland, or Hungary, or Sweden ? Is our peasantry† to be degenerat-

ed

*. There is, in general, a prominent question which presents itself to the mind of every speculator. He first ascertains what he already possesses, and then calculates what he may possibly gain or lose by the adventure. If the chances in his favour be great, he risks without much hesitation ; if of gain and loss be nearly equal, he ponders a long time before he ventures to trust himself to the caprices of fortune ; and it is, frequently, only at a moment, when his fancy and spirits are mounted, that he ventures at all :—But when there is only a prospect of loss, he at once abandons his project.

† In almost every other country but this, the distinction between the nobles and those who are not so, is

ed into the miseries of vassalage, and placed under the tyrannic lash of barbarous and despotic Russia? Are our comforts and wealth to be converted into the miseries and poverty of Denmark and Sweden? Are we to surrender the grand franchises by which we are peculiarly distinguished—the habeas corpus act and trial by jury, those firm pedestals on which the structure of civil liberty reposes, for the mummery of high-sounding names, and the emptiness of speculative free-

is odious and intolerable. There exist but two classes. All the honours, and privileges, and emoluments of the state, are shared by the one, from which the other is totally excluded. How different is it with us, where the upper and lower orders are united by a middle class, which associates with both; where a nobleman possesses no prerogatives which are hurtful or offensive to his inferiors, or which interfere with his rights; where the road to honour, riches, and fame, is open to every one alike; and where a man of merit is sure of the patronage of the public. The church, the bar, the army, the navy, the house of commons, furnish an ample field of action, to which every one may aspire; and we need only look to many of the most eminent posts that are filled in this country, to be satisfied, that it is not birth or family connection, but the more honourable claim of talents and merit, which have secured to them their present distinction.

dom ?

dom ? Are our domestic virtues, our religious sentiments, our peaceful enjoyments, to be sacrificed to the dissolute immorality, the impious scepticism, the infuriated persecutions of modern France ? Look to the countries where her arms have already prevailed. Where she has only passed, like the noxious winds which infect the vegetable world, she has scattered temporary ruin and desolation ; but where she has taken up her abode, she has inflicted more deadly and more permanent wounds. Where has she intruded, either as a friend or an enemy, without leaving a lasting memorial of her avarice and cruelty ? Who can pretend to record the variety of her crimes, or to estimate the amount of her plunder, in Italy, Germany, and Spain ? Even in Holland, which she has annexed to her empire ; which she has, in a manner, assimilated with her government ; and which she affects to treat with the tenderness of paternal care, has she not proved, by her extortions, even that her friendship leads to destruction ?*

* The Dutch, in the province of Holland, have paid, since January 1795, in extraordinary contributions,

In these countries, we may partially read the fate of our own, should we ever be weak enough to listen to French seduction, or pusillanimous enough to yield to French arms. But mild is the fate which others have experienced, to what we should be doomed to suffer, were the French once to obtain the mastery. The pride of conquest, the zeal of party, the spirit of revenge, the cruelty of carnage, the avarice of plunder, every destructive principle, every injurious motive, would operate towards the consummation of our ruin. Havoc and desolation, pillage and lust, tyranny and licentiousness, would soon complete the subversion of all that we love, and venerate, and esteem. The experience of ages, the laws, the arts, even the

tions, at least 25 per cent. on their capital; or, at the rate of 5 per cent. interest, 500 per cent. on their income. The ordinary taxes are, at the same time, exorbitant, and the price of provisions has nearly doubled itself within the last eight years. The expence of the 25,000 French troops that are maintained for the defence of the country, is about equal to the charges of the peace establishment of the whole army and navy under the old government.

venerable pile of the constitution itself, the care and glory of so many generations, would vanish before the brutal vehemence of their profane attacks. What would become of moral virtue, of domestic happiness, of conjugal faith, of filial piety, of religion, of honour and patriotism, which form so striking a contrast to the manners of the continent, and so eminently distinguish us from the rest of the world? Every thing would be contaminated and polluted, and we should soon mingle with the general mass of corruption and vice. Those noble and generous qualities which have so long marked us out from among the people of the earth, which have laid the foundations of our glory and our happiness, and which have preserved the edifice after its completion, would no longer challenge the applause, and command the admiration of mankind.

The times are certainly critical, and it requires all our firmness, and vigilance, and exertion, to weather the storm, and to conduct the ship of state into a safe haven. We never were opposed by such a league of enemies,

enemies, nor were our domestic distresses* ever so great. Yet, through all this gloom, I think

* Amidst other calamities, none can be a cause of more serious alarm, or more general regret, than the present exorbitant price of provisions, by which the industrious poor are curtailed in those comforts and innocent recreations to which they have been accustomed, and to which their patient forbearance, their steady obedience to the laws, and their firm attachment to the constitution, so eminently entitle them. The opulent class of society has, certainly, shewn every disposition to their relief, and the many sacrifices and laudable institutions for that express purpose, cannot be sufficiently commended; but, I fear, there is another class of people, whose love of gain, shuts their ears to the calls of humanity, and whose nefarious practices have been the chief cause of our present sufferings. Even supposing, the failure of the crop, as stated by the committee of the House of Commons, to have been one fourth below the usual produce, still the diminution in point of consumption, and the immense supplies that have been already received from abroad, must have contributed, in no inconsiderable degree, to restore the level. But, even admitting, that our frugality and our importation have been to no consequential amount, at all events, the crop being but one fourth deficient, and, as according to

I think I can discover the cheering rays of a brighter day. The pre-eminence to which we have

every principle of fair dealing, the quantity ought to regulate the price—it should not be sold above ~~one~~ fourth, or at most, ~~one~~ fifth higher. What then is the reason that it has augmented in price—threefold? This is a touchstone which at once exposes the extortions of avarice, and the ruinous effects of monopoly. Pursue the evil in its consequences, and where will it end? Why, as the leases fall in, the landholders will raise their rents, and then the present prices are permanently fixed. The mechanics and labouring poor, who must suffer dreadfully from the pressure of the times, being unable to gain their support, their wages must be increased. This will immediately occasion more than a proportionate advancement in the price of our manufactures, and other nations, once being able to undersell us in foreign markets, our trade will sustain a shock from which it may, possibly, never recover. Freedom of commerce, freedom, in short, of every kind, as long as it can be safely enjoyed, I am a decided advocate for; but when it evidently interferes with the absolute welfare and existence of the people, it is the business of the legislature to correct the abuse. Corn is not like any other article of traffic. It is not a luxury which can be dispensed with; it is a necessary which must be had—and no laws can punish

have attained over the other states of Europe, has occasioned a jealousy which has been the principal cause of the combination that has been formed against us. Britain they say, is too great and too powerful — let us endeavour to humble her pride, and to reduce her to the level of ourselves. This confederacy is, however, probably the last that will be made against our rights and independence, and, notwithstanding the alarming aspect which it at present wears, it is, perhaps, more likely than any other event to lead to a termination of this long and disastrous conflict. Almost the whole strength of Europe is now concentered against us, and when it is found that we are neither to be appalled by preparation, nor subdued by force, it is natural to suppose, that all parties, wearied out with exertion, will view

punish with too great severity, those, who, by engaging in speculations, and other undue practices, are thriving on the distresses of the people, and with-holding from them, the very staff of life.

further

further contention as useless, and that a general pacification, founded on the rights of independent nations, and the long established customs and usage of Europe, will be at last concluded.

When this long-wished for moment arrives, how gratifying will be the reflections to which we can recur. How glorious will it be to recollect, when the time of suffering is past, that we have successfully resisted the collected strength of Europe, and, by proving the impotence of their attacks, that we have secured to ourselves the perpetuation of our rights. Arduous as the struggle has been, our satisfaction will be proportioned to the sacrifices to which we have submitted. On what then have we to hesitate ? Submission and disgrace, resistance and glory, unanimity and independence, must ever go hand in hand. Our perils are great, but our means, if properly applied, are not insufficient. Let us then unite for our own defence, and the chastisement of our foes. Let us offer up petty dissensions and party animosities

mosities at the pure altar of public good, and, evident as our danger and our duty are, let us be convinced that we can only avoid the one, by pursuing the other.

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Giles Earle, esq.
Rev. Laurence Panting
Alexander Allardyce, esq.
James Forbes, esq.
Lt. Col. Wm. Bagwell
Charles Jenkinson, esq.
Right Hon. Isaac Corry
John Mackanefs, esq.
William Borrer, jun. esq.
Lt. Col. William Murray
James Bolger, esq.
Captain Allée
John Hawkins, esq.
Earl of Longford
Rev. Phillip Dodd
John Machell, esq.
William Forde, esq.
Bishop of Meath
Frederick Frederick, esq.

(8)

Lord Viscount Cloncurry
Thomas Hume, esq.
Peter Garforth, jun. esq.
Sir William Smyth, bart.
John Tyrrell, esq.
William Hunter, esq.
Lt. James Anderson, R. N.
Lord Rossmore
Rev. Richard John Hay
Major Hart
William Gordon, esq.
Charles Greenwood, esq.
Sir James Blackwood, bart.
Rev. John Buckworth Hern
Colonel Beaumont
Brigadier General Scott.
Sir Grenville Temple, bart.
Rev. John Robinson.
Duke of Portland.
Mr. Raines.
Mr. Todd.
Robert Markland, jun. esq.
Donald McLeod, esq.
Sir James Milles Riddell, bart.
Colonel Campbell, 91st Regiment.
John Richardson, esq.
Archibald E. O'bins, esq.
Right Hon. John Ormsby Vandeleur.
Major General Read.
J. W. Commerell, esq.
Earl Spencer.
Colonel Brownrigg.
Lord Berwick.
James Law, esq.
John Burnes Foyer, esq.
J. Mullulla, esq.
Proprietors of the Liverpool
Athenæum.
Edward Wilbraham Bootle, esq.
Rev. Mr. Hodgson
Rev. George Whitmore, D. D.
Lord Sunderlin
Sir Vere Hunt, bart.
Mr. O'Dwyer, esq.
Colonel Jackson
William Childe, esq.
Mr. Wm. Clarke, jun.
Sir Broderick Chinnery, bart.
John Harrison, esq.





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